

Paris Semester Testimonials

Check this page for weekly updates from Asbury University's Paris Semester — a life-changing opportunity for students to immerse themselves in another culture, earn credit toward any major and complete an international internship. [Learn more about Asbury University's Paris Semester \(/academics/study-abroad/paris/\)](/academics/study-abroad/paris/)!

The Paris Semester's Lifelong Impact

Paris Semester Program Assistant Alexa Goins '16 reflects on her involvement with the Paris Semester

When I signed on to be Asbury University's Paris Semester Program Assistant, I had no idea how God was about to move.

Two years after completing the Paris Semester as a student, it's still changing my life in ways I never expected. I've returned to France twice since then. Four months after graduating from the University in May 2016, I found myself boarding a plane to Hyères, France for an eight-month stint teaching English at a vocational high school through the French Ministry of Education. It was terrifying, exciting and the perfect post-graduation plan for someone who wasn't completely ready to jump into the nine-to-five life. Upon arrival, I had to open a bank account, find an apartment, start a new job and learn how to be a functioning adult all in French — a language I'd minored in, but was far from fluent in. With no familiar faces in this foreign little city, each day felt like an accomplishment. I know I wouldn't have been able to do any of it had I not first experienced the Paris Semester.

Before coming to Paris in the fall of 2015, I was always on edge, a definitive Type A personality who was afraid to do the smallest of unfamiliar tasks and always had a plan. I was also a workaholic with terrible skills in the work-life balance department. The Paris Semester forced me to slow down, to do many unfamiliar tasks and reminded me of what was truly important in life (hint: a perfect career was not).

I owe so much of the person I am today to the Paris Semester. So you can imagine my delight when I was asked to be the Program Assistant for the Fall 2017 semester. A third year in a row, I found myself boarding a plane to France — this time with much less anxiety and much more excitement to be part of something bigger than myself. I was excited to see how God would work in the lives of the 15 students that made up the 2017 cohort. And boy, did God work in their lives in Paris.

From the nervousness and culture shock felt by most at the beginning of the semester to the newfound independence and confidence had by all at the end, this program is truly a catalyst for change in the best way. It was so rewarding to witness students go from being afraid to go out or take the metro alone to creating a daily routine,

truly embracing French culture, excelling in language classes and getting exciting opportunities to do things like photograph Paris Fashion Week and model for Franck Provost's salon. Most of all, I'm so thankful that I got to witness this new group of students experience the same deep personal growth that I experienced just two years prior.

Now as the students adjust to life at home in the U.S., I know the Paris Semester will continue to impact their lives. Some will undoubtedly return to France to live again. Others will use their newfound independence as a launchpad for whatever God has for them after they graduate from the University. The Paris Semester is something that made my education at the University truly special and prepared me for life after college. It's a gentle nudge into adulthood and exposure to other cultures. It's starting here at Asbury and impacting the world. I can't recommend this program enough.

Students Return to Campus After Paris Semester

Ellie Watkins '19 contemplates personal growth and returns to University campus after completing Paris Semester Program.

Returning to Asbury University's campus after 12 weeks studying abroad with the Paris Semester Program taught me one final lesson — dealing with change. I loved living in Paris; it was the most defining three months of my life. I learned a lot about what I wanted out of life, and discovered even more about myself than I have ever before, but I also missed being on campus. I missed homecoming, I missed hall traditions and I missed our tri-weekly chapels.

When I visited the University after settling back into a more American routine for a week at home in Florida, I was excited to be back at my second home. As I pulled into the semi-circle, I let out my trademark, excited squeal while I clapped my hands looking around my cozy campus.

I ran into some of my hall mates as soon as I turned the corner of my Second Glide home. It was exciting to see those familiar faces, but the unfamiliar faces of freshmen on our hall reminded me that, while my life changed in Paris, so did everyone else's on campus. Reality really set in when I came into my dorm room. Room 220 has become more of a home to my roommate, who has spent this semester in our room alone. We both learned how to settle in without each other, while our lives went on to grow and change away from our norm of living side by side.

While multiple friends ran in to greet me, I noticed myself feeling emotions that I had not prepared for. I quickly realized that every person I would run into would ask the same questions, "How was Paris?" and "What did you do there?" I loved that my friends cared, but I didn't know how to answer them. I could never quite figure out how to sum up the significance of the past 12 weeks in a 15-second response. I was stumped by these unusual feelings of wanting to be alone. My extraverted tendencies seemed to disappear when all I craved was an independent walk alone in order to clear my head.